

Off Highway Vehicle License Fund Grant Application Packet

November 15, 2013

Submitted by:

Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District

645 Main Street, Suite F

Morro Bay, CA. 93442

(805)-772-3491

www.CoastalRCD.org

for the project known as

Dune Lakes Native Plant Restoration Project

Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District
645 Main Street, Suite F
Morro Bay, CA. 93442
(805) 772-4391

November 15, 2013

County of San Luis Obispo General Services Agency-Parks
Attn: Off Highway Vehicle License Fund Grant Administrator
1087 Santa Rosa Street
San Luis Obispo, CA. 93408

Dear Grant Administrator:

Herewith please find the application packet submitted by the Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District, a San Luis Obispo County special district (the "RCD"), to the County of San Luis Obispo Off Highway Vehicle License Fund Grant Program, for a proposed project of the RCD known as the Dune Lakes Native Plant Restoration Project.

Our submittal is in the category of Restoration.

Please see the answers below to the questions posed in the application.

1. Submittal Date: November 15, 2013

2. Applicant Information:

Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District
645 Main Street, Suite F
Morro Bay, CA. 93442
(805)-772-3491
www.CoastalRCD.org

3. Title of Project: Dune Lakes Native Plant Restoration Project

4. Amount of Funding Requested: Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000.00)

5. Complete Project Description: The project is the gathering of seed, cleaning of seed, planting and growing of seedlings, and outplanting of seedlings on one or more areas of the Dune Lakes property, an approximately 900-acre privately-owned hunting preserve south of the community of Oceano, California, immediately adjacent to (and inland of) a portion of the Oceano Dunes State Vehicle Recreation Area (ODSVRA). It has been estimated that planting projects of this nature,

conducted on the ODSVRA, cost in the range of \$4-5 per plant when fairly large-scale plantings (5,000 plants or more) are involved in planting efforts. Therefore the goal of the project is to plant up to 8,000 native plants (including bush lupine, deerweed, mock heather, and other species native to the Oceano Dunes area) at one or more suitable locations on the Dune Lakes property with the objective of assisting in trapping sand and dust particles that would otherwise continue to move inland, and ultimately into one or another of the natural lakes at the inland edge of the dunes.

6. Objective of Project. The objective of the project is to expand efforts at sand and dust control through vegetation establishment within ODSVRA onto the adjacent private property. Results from years of such efforts at ODSVRA has shown that native dune vegetation can be established or reestablished, and that such areas clearly serve to trap sand and dust particles and assist in offsetting the "mobilization" of such particles by vehicle activity. The proposed project would extend these efforts onto private property, however, the benefits of this effort would accrue to both the private property owners and the general public.

7. Project completion schedule. If the grant is awarded, collection of seeds would begin as soon as possible. It is anticipated that this collection would occur simultaneously with seed collection for other similar projects, primarily in the summer and early fall of 2014. The collected materials would be cleaned (i.e., screened of extraneous material) and planted into small, specialized pots for growing into seedlings the following spring. After about three to six months of growth in these pots the seedlings are ready for outplanting. Outplanting is undertaken after the first or second "good" rain of the rainy season, which usually comes in November but may come as early as October or as late as January. This is because there is no irrigation of the plants once outplanting has occurred. Site selection and preparation are used to increase the potential for successful planting, but it can be seen that much depends on the weather. Nevertheless, the entire process (collection, cleaning, seedling establishment and care, and outplanting) would require about eighteen to twenty months from beginning to end. Minor care and monitoring of plantings is undertaken after outplanting but irrigation or other large-scale care is not realistic and is generally not done. The project therefore would likely be completed by late 2015 or early 2016.

8. Justification for Project. Over the years the Dune Lakes property has suffered damage from vehicle trespass, subsequent loosening and blowing of sand, blowing of sand from the Recreation Area onto the property, blowing of litter, trash and debris onto the property, and other impacts of the use of the ODSVRA. Since this damage is caused by the public use of the ODSVRA, it is reasonable that attempts at reducing this damage be undertaken. Furthermore, in recent years there has been some controversy over the area-wide impact of off highway vehicle use at ODSVRA, especially in the realm of air quality. Critics of the use claim that on windy days dust particles can be carried inland for miles from the ODSVRA, and that the occurrence of this dust is exacerbated by off highway vehicles loosening and "mobilizing" this dust. Planting of vegetation is seen as a valid methods of reducing this effect, in that the vegetation slows down surface wind speeds which in turn cause particles which would otherwise continued moving to drop to the ground and stop moving. Once shrub establishment is successful, crustal vegetation, mostly mosses, can within a few years form a vegetative crust over the sand and stabilize much, though obviously not all, of this movement. Therefore expansion of such revegetation efforts can have a positive effect on local air quality. Significant efforts have been undertaken at ODSVRA in the past; however, these efforts have heretofore not been undertaken on private property. The Dune Lakes property, though privately owned, is subject to a conservation easement granted by the property owners to the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County some years ago. The primary purpose of the easement was to retain the property in its essentially natural condition, while permitting its continued use as a

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13. Design plans/other information. It is expected that, if the grant is awarded, a detailed survey of the Dune Lakes property would identify sites where topography, slope, and aspect would suggest the sites most amenable to the revegetation effort and most likely to be successful. This type of work is art as much as science: the science is in understanding the needs in collecting and processing the seeds, germinating them, and getting them to the proper size for outplanting; the art is in selecting planting locations most likely to ensure success. For these reasons detailed planting plans or location maps are unnecessary and not useful; years of experience has shown how knowledge of the dunes and the native plants thereon can be used to best ensure successful effort.

14. Expenditure program. As noted earlier, experience by State Parks and other personnel familiar with the revegetation process have found that the average cost per seedling (using 5,000 plants as an example) is approximately \$4-5 per plant by the time the plant is placed into the ground. The cost includes significant labor, as seed collection, cleaning, preparing of pots and planting of seeds, watering and other care while the seeds germinate and establish, selecting and preparing a site or sites for outplanting, and the actual outplanting effort are all labor intensive. Out of pocket costs associated with this effort include vehicle costs (fuel and maintenance), cost of pots, cost of planting mix for the seedlings, and hay for planting site preparation. Sometimes there is the additional cost of fence materials (within the ODSVRA) and mini-wind barriers such as shingles, if a site is especially exposed to the wind. It is anticipated that of the grant amount, ten percent or \$4,000 would be allocated to administrative overhead and costs such as processing staff payroll and other payments such as to contractors or suppliers. The balance (\$36,000) is expected to permit the growing and outplanting of approximately 7,200 seedlings of the species described earlier, all of which are recognized as good pioneer species in the Oceano Dunes area. At an estimated planting density of 16 square feet per plant (i.e., one plant every four feet), an area of approximately 2.6 acres could be planted. Lupine, deerweed, and mock heather can mature to a size of approximately four to five feet tall and three feet in diameter; thus a successful planting would result in a vegetative cover of approximately 60 percent. Most of the cost would be for labor; \$3,000 would be earmarked for materials and supplies. If such costs are less than that, the balance would be utilized for additional labor. At an assumed cost of \$30 per hour for labor, 1,100 hours of labor would be available.

15. Matching funds. The RCD is in a position to contribute additional labor costs in amount of \$5,000, sufficient to cover 166 additional hours of labor, for a total labor time of 1,266 hours.

16. Experience of applicant. The RCD has three employees experienced in plant restoration, including one individual with more than ten years' experience in revegetation on the Central Coast at ODSVRA, other dune habitats to the south, and Vandenburg Air Force Base at Lompoc in San Luis Obispo County. The RCD currently contracts with the California Department of Parks and Recreation to support revegetation efforts at ODSVRA, and is in a position to easily access the Dune Lakes area to undertake the proposed project. In addition, several RCD Board members are well-known experts in local botany, biology, and ecology, with considerable additional experience in dune and other habitat restoration techniques and methodologies. Finally, the RCD can expect the staff at ODSVRA to be willing to share their own knowledge and expertise in these efforts. Indeed, it is expected that the proposed project, if successful, would greatly benefit the ODSVRA itself by providing additional sites where this type of impact mitigation can be undertaken.

17. Consistency with Allowable Use Criteria and Evaluation Criteria. Section (e) under the category of Restoration states that allowable uses include "Restoration projects that generally

improve and restore the function of natural resource system damage by motorized activities.” The proposed project would do just that. At the present time fence maintenance and patrol by the Dune Lakes property staff have reduced the level of trespass problems they experience; however, such problems still occur occasionally today (see photo). More importantly, however, the presence of a heavily traveled route immediately adjacent to the property boundary allows for impacts of “mobilized” sand and dust, as well as litter, trash, and other debris to easily cross onto the Dune Lakes property, regardless of direct impacts caused by intentional vehicle trespass. The proposed project would begin to address these impacts. Therefore the RCD believes that the project as proposed fully meets both the allowable use and evaluation criteria.

I hereby certify that the above statements are true and correct to the best of my knowledge. Thank you for the opportunity to seek this grant support.

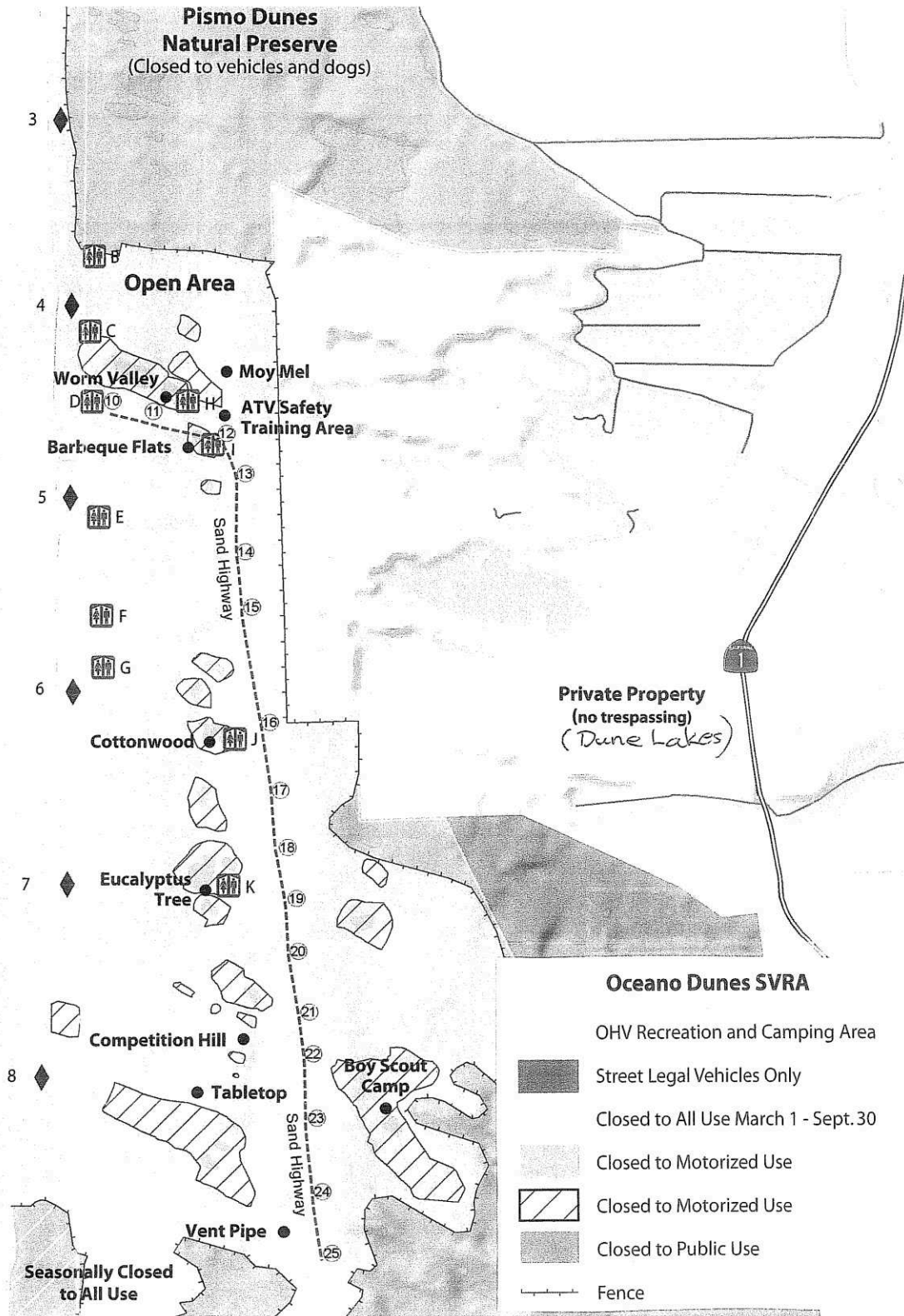
Sincerely,



Neil Havlik, President, Board of Directors
Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District

Attachments:

Vicinity Map
Photos (3) of project area
Letter from Dune Lakes



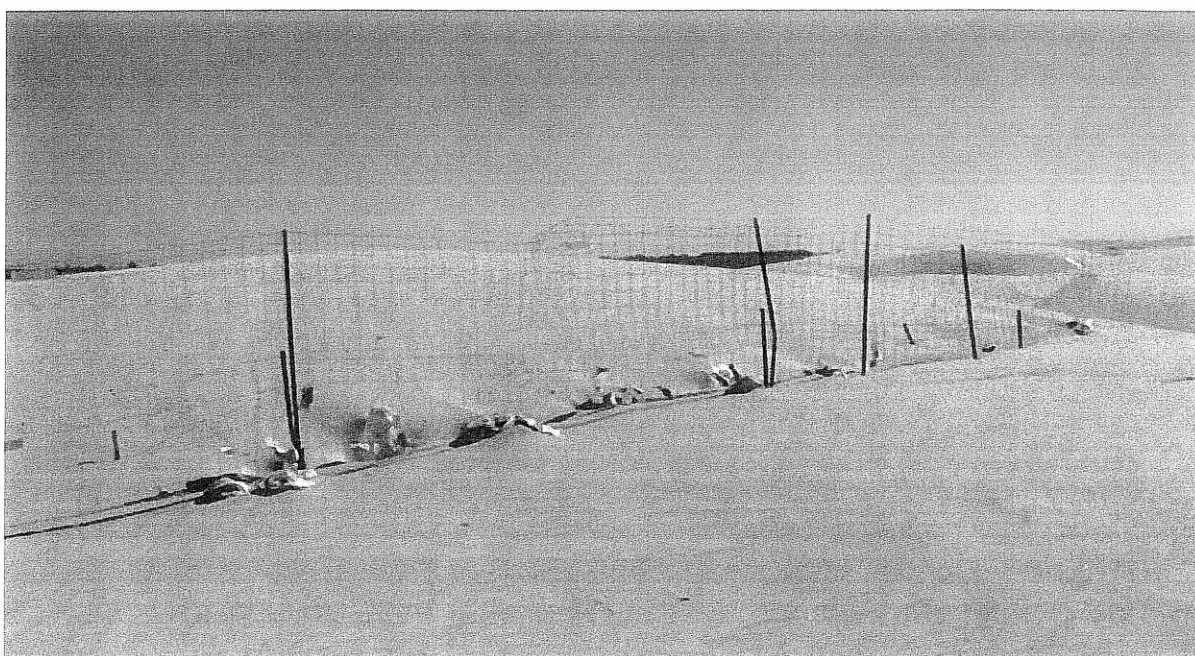
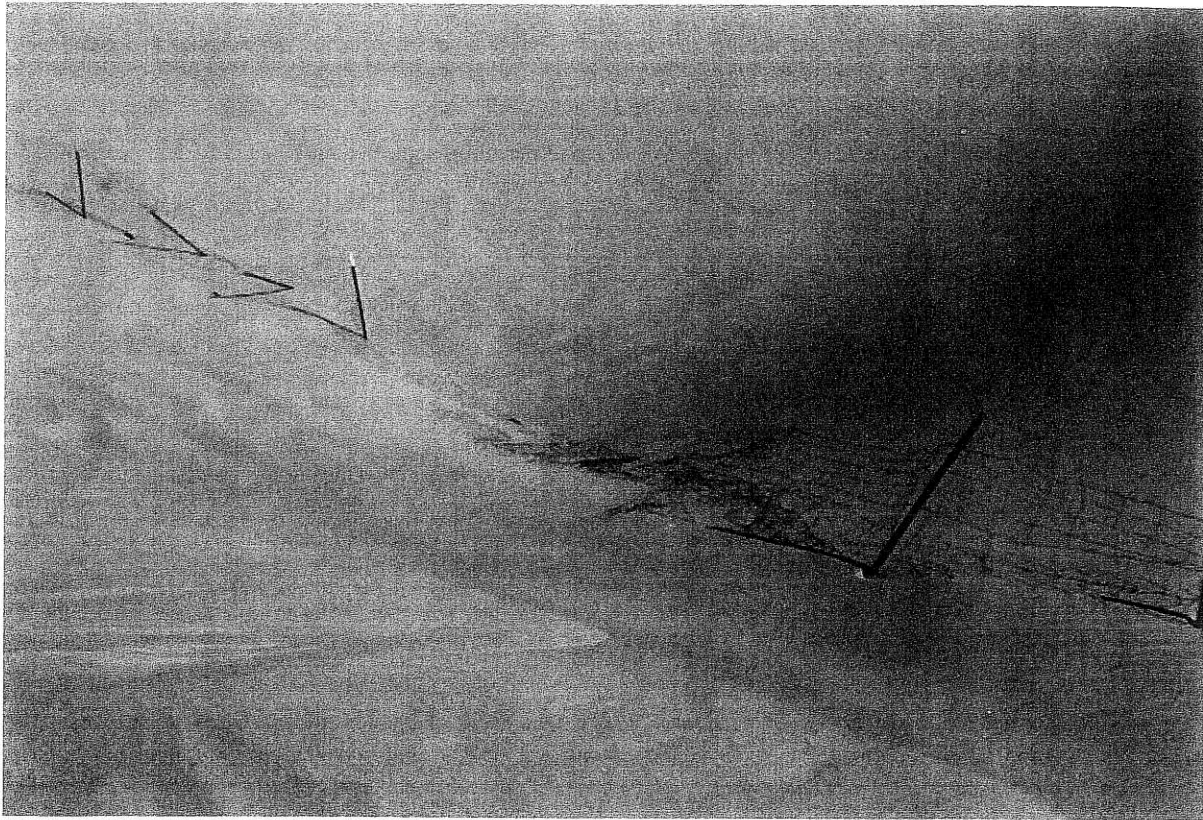


Photo of ODSVRA/Dune Lakes property boundary and fence, showing effect of prevailing winds.
Dune Lakes property to the left of the fence.



Another view of ODSVRA/Dune Lakes boundary, showing an area where the fence has fallen over or been pushed over, allowing trespass into Dunes Lakes property. ODSVRA property to lower left of fence, Dune Lakes property on upper right. Not faded vehicle tracks.



Looking inland onto Dune Lakes property, showing "blowout" of dune vegetation. An area such as this would be an excellent candidate for revegetation efforts.

From: Denise Madsen <denise@slrcc.com>
Subject: Letter to Steve
Date: November 9, 2013 at 8:43 PM
To: Bryan Madsen <bryan@slrcc.com>

November 8, 2013

Mr. Neil Havlik, President

Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District 645 Main Street, Suite F
Morro Bay, CA. 93442

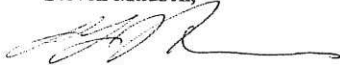
RE: Application for Grant Support from the San Luis Obispo County Off-Highway Vehicle Fund:

Dear Mr. Havlik:

This letter is to confirm that the owners of the Dune Lakes property in Nipomo, California, support the application of the Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District (CSLRCD) for the above named grant program, to undertake planting of dune vegetation on the Dune Lakes property to assist in offsetting damage occurring to our private property caused by off-highway vehicle traffic on the adjacent Oceano Dunes State Vehicle Recreation Area. We understand that the grant funds, if successfully obtained, will be used to undertake planting of native dune plant species in areas of the Dune Lakes property acceptable to the property owner, with a goal of helping to reduce the movement of sand and other fine particles, which contribute to sediment accumulation in the natural lakes on our property. Please keep the undersigned informed of your progress in seeking this grant, and thank you for your interest in the Dune Lakes property.

Sincerely,

Steven Madsen,



Property Manager Dune Lakes